SANTA SINGH
IS COMING TO
TOWN
A light-hearted Punjabi Christmas comedy
set in London

“Santa Singh Is Coming to Town”

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By Ek Noor

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CHARACTERS

MAIN FAMILY

GUDDI/MRS. MULTANI (Late 50s - early 60s)

Warm, sharp-tongued matriarch; practical, bossy, loving.

PAPAJI / MR. MULTANI (60s)

Old-school Punjabi dad; loud, proud, oblivious to double standards.

SONIA (30s)

Smart, sarcastic, balanced between tradition and modernity.

KABIR (30s)

Sonia’s well-meaning but hapless husband.

NIKKI (Early-mid 20s)

Socially aware, feminist, TikTok-loving younger sister.

LUCKY (50s)

Guddi’s brother; lots of bravado, no kitchen skills; comedic chaos.

SPECIAL APPEARANCE

SANTA SINGH (Unknown age-timeless)

Punjabi-fied Santa; cheerful and delivers joy.

ACT ONE

SETTING:
A warm, slightly chaotic London Punjabi dining area. Christmas decorations scattered everywhere. The kitchen is offstage and only heard

SCENE 1 - The Calm Before the Chai-Storm

AT RISE:
***GUDDI** moves briskly across the room with a clipboard and wrapping paper. **NIKKI** fights with tangled fairy lights. **PAPAJI** lounges with chai.*

GUDDI: *(to herself, muttering)* Every year the same drama… turkey, tree, tantrums. Christmas is basically Diwali with worse food.

PAPAJI: *(raising his chai)* **GUDDI,** you say this but you love Christmas. You start playing Bhangra carols in October.

GUDDI: I do not! *(beat)*…Only November.

NIKKI: *(struggling with fairy lights)* Why do these lights get tangled on their own? Do they walk around at night?

PAPAJI: Beta, you have to show them discipline. *(drinks chai)* Firm hand, clear rules. *(points)* Start by separating the alpha bulb.

NIKKI: *(rolls eyes)* **PAPAJI**, these are fairy lights, not wolves.

GUDDI: Stop pretending like you know what you're talking about. You haven't decorated a tree since 1992.

PAPAJI: Excuse me! I put the star on top every year!

GUDDI: Yes! After I lift you on a chair.

PAPAJI: Teamwork makes the dream work.

(He raises his chai again like he’s making a toast.)

(Nikki suddenly yelps as the lights flicker.)

NIKKI: Okay, either I fixed them or I summoned a demon.

GUDDI: Just put them on the tree before it becomes possessed.

***(SONIA** enters from offstage (kitchen), carrying a mixing bowl and wearing an apron dusted with flour.)*

SONIA: Mum, the oven is doing that weird clicking noise again.

PAPAJI: That’s normal.

SONIA: No, **PAPAJI**, ovens shouldn't sound like they’re trying Morse code.

PAPAJI: *(back confident)* It’s fine. The oven knows it’s Christmas. It’s excited.

SONIA: You’re describing the oven like it has emotions.

PAPAJI: Everything has emotions. Even my slippers. They miss me when I go out.

*(**NIKKI** snorts. Sonia sighs. **GUDDI** takes deep breaths)*

GUDDI: *(to Sonia)* **KABIR** coming?

SONIA: He said he's on his way. *(under her breath)* And he said he'd help. *(beat)* So I'm assuming he'll arrive, eat, and fall asleep on the sofa.

GUDDI: These men! Born tired.

PAPAJI: It is not tiredness. It is mental load. I am the thinker of the house.

GUDDI: Then think yourself into the kitchen and check the oven!

PAPAJI: I would, but this chai is at a critical temperature.

NIKKI: Critical temperature? *(beat)* Are you a chai scientist now?

PAPAJI: I am a man of many skills.

(A loud CLANG from the offstage kitchen. Everyone jumps.)

SONIA: *(shouting offstage)* **LUCKY**, are you okay?

LUCKY: *(offstage)* Yes yes! Everything under control! *(then, quietly to himself but audible)* Ow… ow… stupid tray…

GUDDI: Every year he insists on helping, every year he injures himself before dessert.

SONIA: He's already on track. It's only 11am.

NIKKI: *(standing, arms crossed)* You know… if the men actually did half the work they claim they "supervise", Christmas wouldn't feel like an Olympic sport for the rest of us.

PAPAJI: Beta, supervising is work. It is leadership! You will understand when you are older.

NIKKI: No, **PAPAJI**. When I'm older, I'll be ruling the world and you'll still be sitting there commenting on the temperature of your chai.

GUDDI: *(smiling)* **NIKKI**, put more fairy lights on the back of the tree, they're not bright enough.

NIKKI: Like the men in this house.

*(**GUDDI** stifles a laugh. Sonia cracks up. **PAPAJI** looks personally offended.)*

PAPAJI: I am very bright. *(pauses, searching)*…Now where are my glasses?

GUDDI: On your head!

***(PAPAJI** feels his head, surprised, then nods like he meant to do that.)*

***(LUCKY** enters from offstage kitchen, holding a spatula and wearing an oven glove on one hand like he's just survived a war.)*

LUCKY: Breaking news; I have discovered the oven clicking noise. *(pauses dramatically)* It is… the oven.

EVERYONE: *(sighing)* **LUCKY**!

Lights Dim.

SCENE 2 - The Tipping Point

AT RISE:
The dining area is messier than before; fairy lights half-hanging on the tree, Christmas crackers

scattered around, wrapping paper rolls leaning against chairs. ***GUDDI*** *is pacing with her clipboard.* ***SONIA*** *is kneeling, trying to tape a loose table leg.* ***NIKKI*** *is scrolling on her phone.* ***PAPAJI*** *and* ***LUCKY*** *sit comfortably at the table with chai and biscuits, supervising absolutely nothing.*

GUDDI: *(reading her clipboard)* Okay, listen everyone. We still need:

Turkey in the oven

Vegetables chopped

Table fully decorated

Presents wrapped

And **PAPAJI** to stop giving opinions no one asked for.

PAPAJI: My opinions are a gift! Freely given! Like charity!

NIKKI: Yeah, the charity shop called, they don't want them back.

(PAPAJI *gasps dramatically.)*

LUCKY: ***(****pointing at the table)* I have been helping. I rearranged the biscuits.

GUDDI: **LUCKY**, you rearranged them into your mouth.

LUCKY: *(smiling proudly)* Exactly! Efficiency.

SONIA: *(standing, brushing dust off her knees)* Okay, I need someone to help me check the turkey. Just check. Open the oven door, poke it, close the oven door.

PAPAJI; *(panicked)* No, no, no. I can't just go into the kitchen like that. I'm not wearing proper shoes.

NIKKI: What shoes do you need? Steel-toe capped boots?

PAPAJI: Safety first! The oven is dangerous. It’s basically a small volcano.

LUCKY: *(raising his spatula in fear)* He’s right. It hissed at me.

(points offstage kitchen) I think it’s alive.

GUDDI: Oh for... *(throws her clipboard onto the table)* I swear, I’m surrounded by adults who behave like children and one turkey that behaves better than all of you!

SONIA: *(tired)* This is ridiculous. We’ve been running around since 7am and these guys *(gestures at **PAPAJI** and **LUCKY**)* haven’t lifted anything except chai.

NIKKI: And their egos.

*(**PAPAJI** sits up indignantly.)*

PAPAJI: I resent that! I have worked very hard today.
(numbering on fingers)
I tested the sofa to make sure it was comfortable.
I taste-tested the biscuits to ensure quality.
I gave Sonia oven advice.
I gave Nikki emotional commentary.
And I provided...
(dramatic flourish)
...moral support.

GUDDI: Moral support doesn’t cook Christmas dinner!

PAPAJI: But it lifts spirits!

NIKKI: Then lift some vegetables, **PAPAJI.** and not Whisky.

LUCKY: *(trying to escape responsibility)* No, no, let **PAPAJI** do that. He’s the head of the family. *(leaping to flattery)* A leader! A visionary!

PAPAJI: *(smiling smugly)* Yes, exactly!

NIKKI: A visionary who is allergic to chores.

PAPAJI: Beta, it's not allergy. It's wisdom. If I don't interfere, you all learn responsibility.

*(**GUDDI** stops. Looks at Sonia. Looks at **NIKKI**. The moment of realisation hits her.)*

GUDDI: Girls… I have an idea.

SONIA: Oh no. Mum's "idea" voice is back.

NIKKI: *(leans forward, excited)* What is it? Are we faking a power cut? Pretending the turkey ran away? Telling **PAPAJI** the oven needs holy water?

GUDDI: Better. Much better.

*(She moves to centre stage. **SONIA** and **NIKKI** gather beside her like generals.)*

GUDDI: Today… we go on strike.

***(**Beat. The men look confused.)*

LUCKY: Strike? Like… with a hammer?

NIKKI: No, **LUCKY**. Strike as in; No work. No chores. No running around. No saving the day. Just… NOTHING.

PAPAJI: *(shocked)* But...but...but who will cook? Who will organise? Who will...?

SONIA: *(smiling)* You.

LUCKY: *(laughs nervously)* Good joke. *(silence)*…That was a joke, right?

GUDDI: You men claim everything we do is “easy” and “nothing”. So congratulations. YOU do it.

(She dramatically takes off her apron and drops it on the table.)

NIKKI: *(joins in, throwing her fairy lights aside)* Strike starts… NOW!

*(Sonia removes her oven glove and places it in front of **KABIR**’s empty chair.)*

SONIA: The kitchen is officially closed to women.

*(**PAPAJI** stands, horrified.)*

PAPAJI: You can’t do this! My chai is...*(stares at cup)* Actually empty now.

GUDDI: Exactly. Good luck, gentlemen.

*(The women sit down at the table...relaxed, legs crossed, treating it like a spa day. **NIKKI** puts on a face mask. Sonia opens her phone. **GUDDI** picks up a magazine like a queen on holiday.)*

LUCKY: *(whispers to **PAPAJI**)* We are doomed.

PAPAJI: *(whispers back)* Don’t worry. We just have to cook one meal. How hard can it be?

(A sudden LOUD CRASH from the offstage kitchen. All freeze.)

LUCKY: *(terrified)* That was the turkey. It attacked.

NIKKI: *(sipping juice, smiling)* Strike feels great already.

Light fade.

ACT TWO - "The Men Take Over (Badly)"

SETTING:
Same as Act One.
The dining area is now even more chaotic; takeaway menus, half-hung tinsel, wrapping paper everywhere. The women sit comfortably at the dining table like they're at a spa retreat.
The MEN hover anxiously near the offstage kitchen door.

SCENE 1 - First Attempts, First Disasters

AT RISE:
PAPAJI, ***LUCKY*** , *and* ***KABIR*** *stand at the threshold of the unseen kitchen like it's a haunted house.*

PAPAJI: *(whispering)* Okay… strategy. We need a plan. We can't just walk in like fools.

LUCKY: Nahi yaar. The oven is… angry.

KABIR: *(confused)* Why would the oven be angry?

LUCKY: Because it hissed at me. And clicked at **SONIA**. And glared at my sister, **GUDDI**.

KABIR: Ovens don’t have eyes.

LUCKY: This one does. I can feel it judging me.

(From the dining table, the women sip drinks and watch.)

NIKKI: *(to Sonia)* They’re scared of an appliance. This is history in the making.

GUDDI: *(shouting)* Boys! Don’t forget to preheat the oven!

PAPAJI: *(shouting back)* We KNOW! We are experts!

(He marches into the offstage kitchen. Instantly; BEEP-BEEP-BEEP (wrong button pressed).)

PAPAJI: *(offstage)* Ay! Why is it talking?! **LUCKY**! **KABIR**! HELP!

LUCKY: *(to **KABIR**)* You heard the man!

*(**LUCKY** and **KABIR** run into the kitchen. More chaotic noises immediately erupt; pots clanging, a small scream, something metallic dropping.)*

SONIA: *(leaning back, pleased)* This is better than Netflix.

SCENE 2 - Men vs. Food

***KABIR,** enters, carrying a roasting tray. The tray is EMPTY.*

KABIR: Good news! We found the turkey.

SONIA: Great. Where is it?

KABIR: *(looking at the tray)* Not… here.

GUDDI: You lost a whole turkey?!

*(**LUCKY** rushes in, waving his arms wildly, as if escaping danger.)*

LUCKY: It fell. Twice. Maybe three times. I lost count!

NIKKI: *(cheering)* We've reached slapstick stage! This is delicious.

*(**PAPAJI** enters next, holding a turkey baster like a sword.)*

PAPAJI: Okay! We wash it, we season it, we cook it! Very simple. Women exaggerate.

GUDDI: *(smiling with pure evil sweetness)* Ji **PAPAJI**, ji. Go on then. We're watching.

*(**PAPAJI** freezes.)*

PAPAJI: You're… watching?

NIKKI: *(lounging)* Always. Supervising. Like you do.

PAPAJI ***(****gulps and returns to the kitchen. Offstage we hear;*

Running water

A splash

A larger splash

A scream

A turkey hitting the floor

***LUCKY** shouting, "NOT AGAIN!"*

KABIR *yelling, "IT SLIPPED OUT OF MY HANDS!"*

PAPAJI *shouting, "SOMEONE TURN OFF THE TAP!"*

LUCKY: *"WHICH TAP?! THERE ARE TWO!")*

(Nikki applauds like she's at the theatre.)

SCENE 3 - The Table of Judgement

The men return, now sweating and exhausted. They present a plate of something unidentifiable.

KABIR: We made…*(looks at it, unsure)* Vegetables?

SONIA: Which vegetables?

LUCKY: Yes.

GUDDI: *(holding plate up to light)* It looks like… boiled sadness.

NIKKI: Or a crime scene.

PAPAJI: Come on! Show some appreciation! We worked very hard! These are artisanal… British… fusion… vegetables.

NIKKI: *(narrowing eyes)* Did you add salt?

LUCKY & KABIR: *(in unison)* NO!

PAPAJI: *(arms crossed proudly)* Salt is dangerous. Better safe than sorry.

GUDDI: You are over 60 years old and you eat 12 pakoras every Sunday.

PAPAJI: Pakoras are safe. They are blessed food.

SCENE 4 - The Meltdown

The men slump at the table.

PAPAJI: *(defeated)* It's impossible.

LUCKY: *(in pain)* My hand is burnt…My back is twisted… And the turkey bit me.

KABIR: I tried so hard and achieved nothing. This is emotionally damaging.

(The women exchange looks; amused, victorious, but softening.)

SONIA: See? THIS is what we do every year. Without complaint. Without medals. Without applause.

NIKKI: Just with back pain and passive-aggressive WhatsApp messages from Aunty-ji.

GUDDI: Gentlemen… welcome to our world.

(The men look up, genuinely humbled.)

KABIR: I'm sorry, **SONIA**. Really. We had no idea.

PAPAJI: Yes…*(shamefully)* I admit defeat. This is not leadership. This is… slavery.

GUDDI: It's not slavery. It's Christmas.

LUCKY: *(shaking his head)* Same thing, yaar.

(The women burst out laughing.)

Light dim.

SCENE 5 - Peace Talks

SONIA: Okay. Truce?

PAPAJI: Truce.

(They shake hands. The men slump into chairs.)

GUDDI: We'll sort the food. But from now on... EVERYONE helps. No exceptions.

PAPAJI: *(raising a trembling finger)* Even… **LUCKY**?

LUCKY: Hey!

NIKKI: Yes, even **LUCKY**. You're not escaping.

KABIR So… what do we do for dinner now?

GUDDI: We order takeaway. A proper Punjabi Christmas.

Everyone cheers.

SCENE 6 -Takeaway

*The family gathers around the dining table as **GUDDI** starts reading takeaway options.*

GUDDI: Okay, who wants biryani?
Butter chicken?
Chilli paneer?

PAPAJI: I want peace and quiet.

NIKKI: Great! You can go sit in the kitchen.

(PAPAJI screams in fear.)

Lights fade on laughter.

ACT THREE - "A Proper Punjabi Christmas"

SETTING:
Same dining area. But now the table is covered with takeaway containers, biryani, samosas, naan, paneer, lamb curry, jalebis. The Christmas tree twinkles warmly in the background. The atmosphere is relaxed, festive, and messy in the best way.

SCENE 1 -The Feast Begins

AT RISE:
Everyone is seated at the table with plates piled high. The women look refreshed.
The men look traumatised but relieved.

GUDDI: Ahhh, this is better. No stress, no oven, no turkey trying to murder **LUCKY**.

LUCKY: *(pointing at a small bruise)* It had teeth. I swear.

SONIA: It did NOT have teeth.

LUCKY: You didn't see the way it looked at me.

PAPAJI: *(solemnly)* I, for one, have learnt a valuable lesson today.

NIKKI: *(smirking)* Which is?

PAPAJI: Never trust poultry.

GUDDI: *(smacks him lightly with a napkin)* NOT the lesson, old man!

(Kabir raises his glass.)

KABIR: Seriously though… Thank you for going on strike.

NIKKI: You're welcome!

KABIR: No, really. If you hadn't, we'd still be thinking Christmas "just happens".You work so hard. We do appreciate it… we just didn't realise how much.

(SONIA** softens, touched.**)

SONIA: And we could've explained better too. Sometimes we just do everything so fast you don't get a chance.

LUCKY: Next year… we will help. Properly. Right, **PAPAJI**?

PAPAJI: Of course! I will chop onions, peel potatoes, lift spirits...*(pauses, panics)* Wait. Chop onions? Peel potatoes?!

NIKKI: *(smiling sweetly)* We'll start you with carrots. They're safer.

(PAPAJI *faints dramatically onto the table. Everyone laughs.)*

SCENE 2 - Dancing in the Dining Room

GUDDI *turns on a Bhangra-style Christmas remix.* Bright, silly, infectious.

SONIA: Come on! Everyone up!

(One by one, they all rise, grumpy at first, then warming up.

NIKKI *does TikTok moves.*

SONIA *dances bhangra with a Santa hat.*

KABIR *joins, always one beat behind.*

LUCKY *does uncle-style shoulder dances.*

GUDDI *is the queen of the floor.*

PAPAJI *"reluctantly" joins but immediately steals the spotlight.*

They dance around the dining table, dodging chairs and samosas.)

NIKKI: *(shouting over music)* THIS is what Christmas should feel like!

GUDDI: Loud?

NIKKI: And full of snacks!

(They spin around the tree in a circle, laughing. Lights glow warm and golden.)

SCENE 3 -A Knock at the Door

As the music fades, everyone collapses into chairs, breathless and happy.

Suddenly

DING-DONG!

The doorbell rings. Everyone freezes.

PAPAJI: Who is that at this time?

LUCKY: Maybe the turkey escaped and called backup.

NIKKI: I'll get it!

(She skips to the (off stage) "door". Opens it.

ENTER SANTA SINGH.

(Full Santa suit, red and white, but Punjabi stylised. He steps into the dining area, lowers his eyes, blinking at the mess, the food, and the family. He adjusts his belt, clears his throat, and says:)

"SANTA SINGH!"

"Wa alaykumu s-salam! Namaste! Sat Sri Akal!…Peace to all Mankind!…

(beat)

(The family stares. Then erupts into cheers.)

GUDDI: **SANTA SINGH**! You made it!

PAPAJI: Come, sit, have food! Just don't go near the turkey. It's dangerous.

SANTA SINGH: *(laughs)* I only deliver joy, not deal with wild animals.

(**NIKKI** *hands him a plate full of snacks.)*

NIKKI: **SANTA** needs carbs.

SANTA SINGH: Ho ho ho ji! Balle-balle! Now THIS is a proper Punjabi Christmas!

(The family gathers around him, creating a warm, tight semicircle around the table.)

*(**KABIR**, feeling smug and festive, stands tall.)*

KABIR: Next year… I'll cook the turkey.

(A horrified silence.)

ENTIRE FAMILY (including SANTA SINGH): *(shouts)* **NOOOOO!**

(Laughter.)

Blackout.

The End.